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ABSTRACT

The author considers the rule of negative transportation in English and discusses his ideas about such a rule in contrast to the theories set forth by Robin Lakoff. The rule of negative transportation allows the shifting of a negative, under certain conditions, from a lower clause into a higher one. The discussion centers around the occurrence of tag-questions which can be attached to a statement. Lakoff claims that, with certain exceptions, it is normal for the tag-question to show opposite polarity, as far as negation is concerned, to the sentence on which it is formed. The author refutes this explanation and argues that contrasting tag-questions indicate that the main sentence or host clause is to be taken to be the point of view of the speaker; matching tag-questions indicate that it is not. (VM)

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NEGATIVE TRANSPORTATION AND TAG-QUESTIONS
(Preliminary Version)

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There are two possible interpretations for sentences like (1).

(1) John doesn't believe that Harry can win.

By the first of them, (1) is simply the negation of (2), and means, "It is not the case that John believes that Harry can win".

(2) John believes that Harry can win.

But there is also a reading that means much the same as (3).

(3) John believes that Harry can't win.

Under this interpretation of (1), the negative which appears overtly in the first clause seems to have semantic application to the contents of the second clause.

These considerations led Fillmore to propose, in 1963[1], that there should be a rule of negative transportation, shifting a negative, under certain conditions, from a lower clause into a higher one. In her paper, "A Syntactic Argument for Negative Transportation"[2], Robin Lakoff comments that the motivation for this rule was originally entirely semantic. She examines a syntactic motivation of the rule that was proposed by Masaru Kajita, but rejects it as inconclusive. She then provides a new set of syntactic arguments in favour of the rule of Negative Transportation. I will briefly explicate a central part of her argument.

Most sentences of English can have a tag-question added to them, as illustrated in (4).

(4) a. John has left, hasn't he?

b. John hasn't left, has he?

Lakoff claims that the normal thing is for the tag-question to show the opposite polarity, as far as negation is concerned, to the sentence on which they are formed. Thus, if the main sentence is positive, as it is in (4a), the tag will be negative, and if the main

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sentence is negative, as it is in (4b), the tag will be positive. She admits that positive tags do sometimes occur on positive sentences, as in (5).

(5) John has left, has he?

but says that such sentences are usually sarcastic or "quite different in meaning" (p.142), if they are grammatical at all.

If a sentence has two or more clauses, the tag-questions are usually formed on the top clause, as (6) shows.

(6) a. John thinks the war is ending, doesn't he?

b. * John thinks the war is ending, isn't it?

In (6a), the tag is formed on the first clause, and (6b) shows that it is impossible to form one on the second. The same is true if there are more than two clauses.

(7) a. Mary said that John thinks the war is ending, didn't she?

b. * Mary said that John thinks the war is ending, doesn't he?

c. * Mary said that John thinks the war is ending, isn't it?

Only the first clause, not the second or third, is capable of having a tag-question formed on it.

The only exception to this, according to Robin Lakoff, occurs when the top S contains a performative. The term "performative" was introduced by J.L. Austin to refer to a certain type of sentence or utterance. He said that the word indicated that "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action - it is not normally thought of as just saying something".[3] So, if someone says, "I pronounce you man and wife", and he is legally qualified to do so, he is actually doing the action of making you man and wife by uttering these words. And if some appropriate person says, "I name this ship Venus", he is actually performing the office of naming it in uttering the words.

One such performative verb, it is claimed, is <u>suppose</u>, in a sentence like (8).

8. I suppose the war is ending.

In a case like this, where the top clause contains a performative verb, Lakoff says we depart from the usual practice of forming the tag-question on the top clause, and form it on the next S down. Thus (9a) is satisfactory, but (9b) is not.

(9) a. I suppose the war is ending, isn't it?

b. * I suppose the war is ending, don't I?

Again, it makes no difference if there are more than two clauses.

(10) a. I suppose John thinks the war is ending, doesn't he?

b. * I suppose John thinks the war is ending, isn't it?

c. * I suppose John thinks the war is ending, don't I?

Because there is a performative verb in the first clause, no tag-question can be formed on it, as (10c) shows. And (10b) reveals that no tag question can be formed on the third and last clause, either. The only one that can have a tag-question formed on it is the next one down from the performative clause, i.e., the second one. This is shown in (10a).

Because of these facts, Lakoff finds it rather odd that (11a), rather than (11b), should be grammatical.

(11) a. I don't suppose the Yankees will win, will they?

b. * I don't suppose the Yankees will win, won't they?

She argues that the negative must originate in the lower S in (11a), and be there at the time the tag-question is formed. Thus, since <u>suppose</u> is a performative verb, we may say that that tag-question was formed on the next S down, and that it shows the opposite polarity from it, in the underlying structure. The alleged rule of Negative Transportation operates only when the verb in the higher clause is one of a very limited set: <u>think</u>, <u>believe</u>, <u>suppose</u>, <u>guess</u> and <u>want</u> are in the set, according to Lakoff, but <u>hope</u>, <u>feel</u> and <u>realize</u> are not.

This is only part of her total argument, which has been justly admired for its elegance. On the strength of it, some have become convinced of the validity of the Negative Transportation rule, but

Ray Jackendoff[4] has provided some reasons for being at least sceptical about it, and I, too, find the evidence for it far from conclusive. I won't retrace Jackendoff's arguments here, but instead will offer new ones, particularly aimed at the validity of the argument of Lakoff's that I have just described.

To begin with, I would like to challenge the adequacy of what Lakoff says about sentences where the tag-question and the clause on which it is formed match each other in polarity. To me, (5) (John has left, has he?) is a completely normal sentence, but Lakoff says that such sentences, where they are grammatical, are usually sarcastic or "quite different in meaning". A good deal depends on what she means by this last phrase, and she doesn't say, but in my dialect, (5) certainly doesn't have to be sarcastic, though it may be. This could be merely a difference between Australian and American dialects, but Guy Carden informs me[5] that the same judgment is not uncommon in America. It would seem preferable then, if possible, to have an account of the formation of tag-questions which would explain these cases of matching polarity, too.

Even if there is some disagreement about how normal (5) is, there should be little about the normality of sentences such as (12).

(12) I hope the water is warm, is it?

Here there is matching polarity, and in fact, opposite polarity is not acceptable.

(13) * I hope the water is warm, isn't it?

Negative tag-questions are not possible when the higher verb is hope, trust, or any one of a similar set. There are other kinds of examples, too.

(14) a. I hear John won, did he?

b. * I hear John won, didn't he?

(15) a. I wonder if John won, did he?

b. * I wonder if John won, didn't he?

(16) a. I doubt if John can win, can he?

b. * I doubt if John can win, can't he?

It would seem that a theory which says that in normal cases tag-questions show opposite polarity from the clauses on which they are formed, is simply turning its back on much of the data. I am interested in finding an account of tag-questions which will give a principled explanation for the occurrence of these sentences, as well as the ones discussed by Lakoff.

I am going to use the term "host-clause" to refer to the particular clause on which a tag-question is formed. For a while, I will limit my observations to cases in which the host-clause is positive. In such cases, where there is only the host-clause and the tag-question, the tag may be of either matching or contrasting polarity, in my dialect. Both (17a) and (17b) are normal sentences, in other words.

(17) a. The book is obscene, is it?

b. The book is obscene, isn't it?

Consider (17a) first, which I have said does not have to be sarcastic. It could be used if the speaker hadn't read the book, or if he had read it and forgotten what it was like, or if he was not sure what the legal definition of obscenity was - in short, in any circumstances where he was in no position to promote his own opinion. In all the uses that I have just described, it could be said that the point of view expressed in the host-clause ("The book is obscene") is not a point of view that the speaker is putting forward as his own. Rather, it is one he is citing in order to ask the listener if it is his. And even if (17a) is used sarcastically ("Oh, so the book is obscene, is it?) that is also a case where the host-clause is not put forward as the speaker's own point of view: quite the contrary. It seems possible to make the generalization, then, that so far as positive host-clauses are concerned, a matching tag-question means that the host-clause is not put forward as the point of view of the speaker,

but as one that is possibly that of the listener. In (17b), on the other hand, the speaker seems to be offering his own opinion, and asking for agreement; so it may be that contrasting tag-questions indicate that the speaker's own opinion is being put forward for acceptance.

I must admit that speakers of my dialect often seem to add positive or negative tags to a positive host-clause almost indiscriminately, but this may well be because there is sometimes a minimal semantic difference between offering a view as your own and asking for agreement with it, and offering a view to which you don't necessarily subscribe, and asking whether the listener agrees with it. But there seem to be reasons for thinking that the basic difference is the one I have indicated. Apart from intuitive feelings about the semantics involved, there are other pieces of evidence which support the notion I have presented. Suppose Harry is engaged in a conversation with John, and the last part of one of Harry's utterances is "Claude is rich". John can pick up and echo these words of Harry's; but if he decides to add a tag-question to them, he must make it one of matching polarity, as in (18).

(18) Claude is rich, is he?

He cannot reasonably utter (19) as a response to Harry's statement that Clause is rich.

(19) Claude is rich, isn't he?

Otherwise, Harry could be excused for thinking that John hadn't been listening. The point is perhaps even clearer in the dialogue shown in (20).

(20) JOHN: I have translated that Russian sentence for you. It means, "Necessity is the mother of invention".

HARRY: It means, "Necessity is the mother of invention", does it?

Compare this perfectly normal dialogue with the one in (21).

(21) JOHN: I have translated that Russian sentence for you. It means, "Necessity is the mother of invention".

HARRY: It means, "Necessity is the mother of invention, doesn't it"?

John could justly be annoyed because it seemed as though Harry was claiming as his own a translation which he had surely just heard from John. And this is the point: it is inappropriate for Harry to use a tag-question of contrasting polarity, precisely because this signals that he is putting forward the translation as his own view.

There is also another kind of indication that the hypothesis is correct. Tag-questions of matching polarity can be attached not only to statements, as in (22a), but also to questions, as in (22b).

(22) a. John drank beer, did he?

b. Did John drink beer, did he?

Tag-questions of contrasting polarity, on the other hand, can be attached only to statements, not to questions, as the examples in (23) indicate.

(23) a. John drank beer, didn't he?

b. * Did John drink beer, didn't he?

Why the difference? Well, if I put forward a proposition as my own point of view, I must give it in the form of a statement. A main question is simply not the appropriate sentence-form for putting forward a claim, an opinion, a judgment, etc. Hence, tag-questions of contrasting polarity will never occur on main questions, only on statements. But since a tag-question of MATCHING polarity is used when the speaker is putting forward a point of view that is not his own, but is possibly someone else's, it is perfectly in place on a main question.

There seems to be a fairly clear differentiation between the significance of matching tag-questions and that of contrasting ones,

provided we keep the host-clause positive. The situation is a little more complicated when we look at cases where the host-clause contains a negative element. The simplest case, where the sentence is spoken simply as an echo of what has already been said, presents no problem.

(24) JOHN: ... and Sue hasn't graduated yet.
HARRY: She hasn't graduated yet, hasn't she?

This is in conformity with the notion that matching polarity should be used if the contents of the host-clause are not put forward as the speaker's point of view. In general, however, the use of matching negative polarity is much more restricted than that of matching positive polarity, for reasons that I do not know. For instance, it is not possible to have a negative question with a matching negative tag.

(25) * Didn't John drink beer, didn't he?

Nor is it possible to have matching negatives in an embedded sentence.

These are just interesting unexplained facts, but a more crucial difficulty arises where there is a negative host-clause but a positive tag-question, as in (26).

(26) Sally isn't pregnant, is she?

There are two quite different interpretations of this sentence:-

(a) One where the host-clause, Sally isn't pregnant, is the viewpoint of the speaker. In this case, it is uttered virtually like a statement, usually with a falling intonation contour, and the tag-question is added merely to invite agreement.

(b) One where the host-clause is NOT represented as the viewpoint of the speaker, or not necessarily so, anyway. This interpretation is brought out much more clearly in (27).

(27) Sally isn't pregnant by any chance, is she?

The speaker of (27) may well be hinting that he thinks Sally IS pregnant, so the host-clause as it stands here cannot be regarded as

necessarily the point of view of the speaker. And so it is with this kind of interpretation of (26), which seems to have much more of the spirit of a question about it than of a statement. And the tag-question usually has a rising intonation contour.

The difficulty is that in this second interpretation, my theory would seem to predict a matching polarity between host-clause and tag-question; however, there is a negative in the host-clause, and the tag-question is positive. Consequently, there seem to be difficulties for the theory at this point. I will now attempt to give a solution for them. In order to do so, I need to turn for a minute to ordinary yes-no questions, as opposed to tag-questions. We are used to thinking of yes-no questions in English as being formed transformationally from statements by reversing the order of the subject and the first part of the auxiliary. There is a natural tendency, therefore, to assume that there will be a one-to-one semantic relationship between statements and questions. But consider (28).

(28) Didn't Aunt Eliza get married?

Two interpretations are possible. One is directly related to (29).

(29) Aunt Eliza didn't get married.

The question (28) asks for verification of the statement (29). But there is another interpretation of (28) which cannot be regarded in the same way. Rather, it seems to be asking whether (30) isn't true.

(30) Aunt Eliza got married.

Paraphrasing, we might express these two interpretations of (28) by the two questions in (31).

(31) a. Is it correct that Aunt Eliza didn't get married?

b. Isn't is correct that Aunt Eliza got married?

The first interpretation therefore seems to be based on a negative sentence, and the second on a positive one. In the second case, the negative seems to be associated with the questioning device, rather than with the original sentence. It is as though NEG-Q were a type

of question rather different from plain Q, and as if the polarity of the questionning element were in contrast with that of the base-sentence.

There is some interesting evidence in support of this way of looking at things. It is well-known that in English there are some items that occur only in the environment of a negative or a question or a limited number of affective items. One case in point is the word much, when it is used without heavy stress.

(33) a. Sue didn't bring much.

b. * Sue brought much.

As (33a) and (33b) illustrate, much can occur in the environment of a negative, but not in a positive environment that contains no other affective item. If we turn (33a) into a question, we get (34).

(34) Didn't Sue bring much?

It is immediately noticeable that (34) is not ambiguous, in the way that (28) was. There is an interpretation which can be paraphrased by (35a), but none aloug the lines of the inadmissible (35b).

(35) a. Is it correct that Sue didn't bring much?

b. * Isn't it correct that Sue brought much?

The second reading of the negative question (34) is excluded because the corresponding POSITIVE sentence is excluded. And this type of reading is excluded every time there is no relevant positive sentence. Just to take one more example, the negative sentence (36a) is permissible English, but the corresponding positive sentence that might be expected, namely, (36b) does not occur.

(36) a. Jane didn't leave until 3 a.m.

b. * Jane left until 3 a.m.

When we turn (36) into a question, we get (37).

(37) Didn't Jane leave until 3 a.m.?

Again, there is no ambiguity. There is an interpretation that may be expressed as shown in (38a), but none that may be expressed as shown in (38b).

(38) a. Is it correct that Jane didn't leave until 3 a.m.?

b. * Isn't it correct that Jane left until 3 a.m.?

There seem to be good grounds, then, for thinking that of the two kinds of interpretation that occur for negative questions, one is based on a negative statement and the other on a positive statement.

So much for the ordinary yes-no questions. Now let us turn back to the sentences that have tag-questions on the end. We have already seen that there are two kinds of interpretation for sentences like (26).

(26) Sally isn't pregnant, is she?

Now, the one where the host-clause, Sally isn't pregnant, is put forward as the view of the speaker seems to be based fairly obviously on the negative sentence (39).

(39) Sally isn't pregnant.

But the second interpretation fairly obviously isn't. Note that (39) is not ambiguous, but (26) is. An extra meaning therefore seems to be imported along with the tag-question. This is exactly what we found with ordinary yes-no questions, though the meanings are certainly quite different here. Furthermore, what seems to be being discussed in the second interpretation of (26) is the positive statement (40).

(40) Sally is pregnant.

In fact, the two interpretations might be paraphrased by (41) (a) and (b) respectively.

(41) a. It is correct that Sally isn't pregnant, isn't it?

b. It isn't correct, by any chance, that Sally is pregnant, is it?

The same sort of evidence can be produced here as for ordinary yes-no questions. (42), for instance, is not ambiguous in the way that (26) is.

(42) Sue didn't bring much, did she?

There is a reading along the lines of (43a), but none along the lines of (43b).

(43) a. It is correct that Sue didn't bring much, isn't it?

b. * It isn't correct, by any chance, that Sue brought much, is it?

If it is true that the second type of reading for (26) was based on a positive underlying sentence, then the absence of the second reading for (42) is explained by the absence of the positive sentence (33b) (Sue brought much). Similarly, because the negative sentence (36a) occurs, (Jane didn't leave until 3 a.m.) but not the positive (36b) (*Jane left until 3 a.m.), there is only one interpretation for (44).

(44) Jane didn't leave until 3 a.m., did she?

I propose, then, that in sentences like (26), where there are two interpretations, the negative is taken to be part of the basic sentence for the first interpretation, and as part of the question for the second. When I say that the negative is taken as part of the question, I do not mean that the tag-question itself is read as negative, for that would give a different meaning, but rather that the negative is grammatically linked to the question-device. I make no proposal here about the best formal machinery for capturing this. There are various possibilities: for instance, there might be an interpretive rule that read NEG as simultaneously having two scopes; one in which it was taken as part of the basic S, and another in which it was taken as part of the wider structure which included the question. Or, in a generative semantics system, different underlying configurations would be necessary in the underlying semantic structure, and subsequent rules would produce the same surface structure. It seems highly likely that it would be possible to present what I am describing in either system, and absolutely certain that much more work would have to be done to motivate precise proposals in either. I will assume, however, that formal machinery could be devised to reflect what seems to be a clear enough notion: that the negative may be alternatively taken as part of the basic-sentence or as part of the questioning device.

We are now ready to take a further step. What if the polarity of the tag-question was determined, not by the surface polarity of the host-clause, but by the underlying polarity? Then, in the case where the underlying host-clause contained a negative, the positive tag-question would have contrasting polarity, but in the case where the underlying host-clause was in itself positive, the positive tag-question would MATCH it in polarity. But if that is true, we now have an elegant symmetry in the polarity of tag-questions. We can now say without reservation that tag-questions show contrasting polarity to the host-clauses when the latter represent the speaker's point of view", and matching polarity when they don't. Or, alternatively, we may say that when a negative occurs in the surface of a host-clause, and the tag is positive, various readings will be taken, involving both matching and contrasting polarity, provided a positive base-sentence is a grammatical possibility.

For the discussion that follows, I need a term by which I can conveniently refer to all verbs which, under certain circumstances, allow tag-questions to be formed on the next clause down. I will use the term "buckpassing verbs" to describe them, since they pass the buck to the next clause down, as far as tag-question formation is concerned, under the appropriate conditions.

Lakoff's argument appears to work, it seems to me, only because she unconsciously restricts the data. Perhaps the most crucial case of this is her insistence, in effect, that the only buckpassers are performatives. Amongst the performatives, she finds that when the next clause down from a buckpassing verb has a tag-question of matching polarity, it is always the case that the buck-passing verb can also be interpreted as one of the "negative transportation" verbs; hence, that explanation for the matching polarity of the complement sentence and the tag-question is always available. If there were any examples of sentences where complement-clause and tag-question had matching polarity, but the higher verb was NOT a

negative transportation verb, her argument would be considerably weakened, for it would open up the possibility of some other explanation for the matching polarity. Her argument leans fairly heavily on the notion that the ONLY occasion when matching polarity occurs is when there is a higher so-called Negative Transportation verb.

Now, I maintain that what she says is perfectly true for performative verbs, but not for all verbs, and that she is misled by her false observation that the only verbs that allow tag-questions to be formed on the next S down are performatives. Although the lack of a definition makes the concept of a performative rather vague, intuitively I would say that the statements in (45) (a) and (b) do not seem to have performatives in the first clause.

(45) a. I'm sure that's right.

b. I know that it's very important.

If the verb in the main clause of (45a) were, say, <u>certify</u>, (<u>I certify that that's right</u>), we could say that the very utterance of the sentence constituted the act of certifying, and that it was a performative sentence. Likewise, in (45b) if the verb were <u>confirm</u> (<u>I confirm that it's very important</u>), the speaker would be performing the act of confirming even in saying so. But I cannot see that there is anything of a parallel kind in (45a) or (45b).

Yet if we try to form tag-questions on these sentences, they must, in each case, be formed on the second S.

(46) a. I'm sure that's right, isn't it?

b. I know that it's very important, isn't it?

(47) a. * I'm sure that's right, aren't I?

b. * I know that it's very important, don't I?

Negative Transportation is not in question, therefore, and sentences (48a) and (48b) are genuine cases of matching polarity between complement S and tag-question.

So far, I have tried to show that Lakoff is wrong in claiming that tag-questions always contrast in polarity with the S's on which they are formed, and that there is a principled semantic regularity governing the conditions under which contrasting and matching polarity occur. I have said that the reason Lakoff makes this wrong claim is that she fails to notice certain cases where matching polarity between host-clause and tag-question cannot be explained on the basis of Negative Transportation.

In the following section, I wish to demonstrate that the negative element nevertheless plays a crucial role in determining the polarity of the tag-question, whether the negative occurs in the host-clause or not. Consider (50a) to (50d).

(50) a. John failed, did he?

b. John failed, didn't he?

c. John didn't fail, did he?

d. John didn't fail, didn't he?

These four sentences represent the logical possibilities of positive and negative polarity, where there is only one clause in the basic sentence. For some unknown reason, matching negative polarity, as in (50d), is unacceptable, except as an echo-question, so we will concern ourselves with the other three. (50a) has matching positive polarity, and (50b) contrasting polarity, and we have seen that this correlates with the fact that in (50b), but not (50a), the proposition John failed is being put forward as the speaker's point of view. (50c), on the other hand, is ambiguous between two readings. In one, the tag-question will have a falling intonation, and the reading will be that the speaker's view is that John didn't fail. In the other, the tag-question will have a rising intonation, and the reading will involve the notion that the speaker is not putting forward the proposition John didn't fail as his own. In the latter case, as we have seen, the base sentence is to be regarded as positive, and the negative element is to be associated with the questioning device.

Now consider what happens when we try to embed each of these in a higher positive clause, as in (51).

(51) a. * I know that John failed, did he?

b. I know that John failed, didn't he?

c. I know that John didn't fail, did he?

Let us suppose, as seems not unlikely, that the complement of know must represent the speaker's own point of view. Then the peculiarity of (51a) would be accounted for by the fact that it does not conform to that requirement, since there is matching polarity. (51b), on the other hand, does. And notice that in (51c), the tag-question can only have a falling intonation, which means that the host-sentence is a true negative. Consequently, (51c) also has contrasting polarity, and presents the speaker's point of view in the host-clause. Now let us see what happens when we make the top clause negative.

(52) a. I don't know that John failed, did he?

b. * I don't know that John failed, didn't he?

c. I don't know that John didn't fail, did he?

The acceptability ratings of the first two sentences are reversed, and so, in fact, is that of the third, since in (52c) the tag-question can only have rising intonation, which shows that the host-clause is not a true negative, but a disguised positive. Consequently, only matching polarity occurs at the underlying level when the top clause is negated; that is, the complement of don't know is never the speaker's point of view. It appears, then, that one effect of negation on a verb like know is to reverse the requirement that the complement be the speaker's point of view, and hence the real polarity of the tag-questions.

Now, since (51c) and (52a) are far from synonymous, (52a) cannot be derived by Negative Transportation, but has the top S negated from the start. Under other circumstances, the words "I don't know" might be interpreted to mean "It is not the case that I know..." and the negative would then produce the logical negation

of the sentence. But that reading is unavailable in (52a), because the tag-question is did he? Under the sentence-negation reading, the tag would have to be do I? This means that the interpretation of negative + know in (52a) is:-

(a) not the logical denial of the sentence, and

(b) not derived from negative transportation.

The interpretation may be roughly paraphrased as "I'm not sure" or "I tend to doubt". Since such readings exist, it is not necessary any longer to assume, with Lakoff, that because a negative in the top S is not the logical denial of the sentence, it must be derived by Negative Transportation.

These considerations throw new light on her example which appeared earlier as (11a) in my numbering, and which I repeat for convenience now as (53).

(53) I don't suppose the Yankees will win, will they?

Working on the assumption that positive host-clauses normally take negative tag-questions, Lakoff finds it "odd" that the tag-question in (53) is positive rather than negative, and uses this as an argument for supposing that the host-clause must have been negative in the underlying structure. But we now have the possibility of explaining these same facts in another way, namely, that so-called performatives like suppose CAN carry a negative in their own right, even though that negative is not to be read as the logical denial of the sentence. This then makes the polarity of the tag-questions perfectly normal.

Sentence (53) would not, in itself, compel acceptance either of Lakoff's analysis or the one presented here, but the latter provides an explanation for sentences like (52a) as well, whereas Lakoff's theory leaves them unexplained. In addition, we are able to account for sentences (22) to (27), which would otherwise be unexplained.

There is a further advantage. Robin Lakoff quotes Dwight Bolinger as saying that he feels that there is a slight difference between the meanings of the (a) and (b) sentences in (54) and (55).

(54) a. John thinks that Bill doesn't like Harriet.

b. John doesn't think that Bill likes Harriet.

(55) a. I expect it not to happen.

b. I don't expect it to happen.

Discussing this claim of Bolinger's, Lakoff says (p.141), "...it seems to me that it must be true in part at least". But if it is true, as Jackendoff has pointed out, it is very damaging to any theory that wants to derive one member of each pair from the other, while maintaining that all meaning is present in the underlying structure. However, the difference that Bolinger is referring to is exactly the sort that would be required by our theory, since it is parallel to the difference between (52a) and (51c).

Once the role of the negative has been arrived at, it helps to explain certain facts even about performatives, which Lakoff's description cannot account for. The verbs <u>suppose</u> and <u>hope</u> are both performatives, in the sense that Lakoff uses that term, and both are buckpassing verbs, as (56) shows.

(56) a. I suppose they won't object, will they?

b. I hope they won't object, will they?

Only <u>suppose</u>, however, and not <u>hope</u>, can be negated.

(57) a. I don't suppose they will object, will they?

b. * I don't hope they will object, will they?

The explanation for this might appear to be that <u>suppose</u> is a Negative Transportation verb and <u>hope</u> isn't. Therefore, the negative that is capable of occurring in the complement of <u>hope</u> will never be promoted to the top clause; hence the nonoccurrence of (57b). That is not sufficient explanation, however, for most verbs that are not Negative Transportation verbs can nevertheless be negated themselves; e.g., <u>claim</u> in (58).

(58) a. I claim that they didn't win.

b. I don't claim that they won.

So the important fact about (57b) is not just that hope cannot be a Negative Transportation verb; it is additionally that hope just cannot be negated.

Lakoff's theory provides no explanation for this fact, but the present one does. It is part of the meaning of hope that the speaker does not know what the facts are, but is expressing his wishes about what they may turn out to be. The complement of hope can therefore NEVER be the committed viewpoint of the speaker. Consider (59).

(59) John isn't angry, is he?

In isolation, (59) is ambiguous between two readings which may be roughly characterized as in (60).

(60) a. John certainly isn't angry, is he? (Falling intonation)

b. John isn't angry by any chance, is he? (Rising intonation)

In (60a), it seems clear that the committed viewpoint of the speaker is that John isn't angry, and that he is merely asking for agreement with this view. But in (60b), the speaker isn't committed to the view that John isn't angry - in fact, he may be subtly suggesting that he is. Now, when (59) is embedded as the complement of hope, it ceases to be ambiguous, as can be seen in (61).

(61) I hope John isn't angry, is he?

There is no reading of (61) parallel with (60a); only one parallel with (60b).

(62) a. * I hope John certainly isn't angry, is he? (Falling intonation)

b. I hope John isn't angry by any chance, is he? (Rising)

It is obvious from this example that the view that something definitely is the case is not compatible with the verb hope, and consequently that the complement of hope cannot represent the committed viewpoint of the speaker. But then, if a negative on a performative has the effect of denying that what follows IS the committed view of the speaker, it would be redundant for one to occur

on hope, since it would be pointless to deny what the verb hope does not assert. Lakoff herself comments on the fact that it would seem to make no sense to negate a performative. But if the negative on a performative were to be read, not as the logical denial of the sentence, but as an indication that what followed was not the speaker's viewpoint, it WOULD make sense for a negative to occur on a performative, but it would make no sense for one to occur on the particular performative hope. And in fact we do find that negatives occur on performatives and that no negative can occur on hope: hence this explanation correctly predicts the facts.

There is one remaining puzzle concerning negatives that has been left out of Robin Lakoff's data, and has been scarecely ever discussed in American writings, though it was glanced at in one recent article. The reason the problem has been ignored may be that the examples I am about to quote do not occur very commonly in American dialects. (63a) and (63b) are entirely normal for my dialect.

(63) a. Harry can drive, I suppose, can't he?

b. Harry can't drive, I don't suppose, can he?

Such order-changes appear to occur only with the so-called performatives. Lakoff claims (p.144) that it is nonsense for a performative to be negated in underlying structure, and, if she is right that suppose is a performative verb (a matter on which I have some doubts), what she says ought to apply just as much to (63b) as to any other performative sentence. But the negative in I don't suppose in (63b) has clearly not been transported to that S from Henry can't drive, since one is still in evidence there. The only way it might be possible to claim that the negative in the suppose clause started out in the other one would be to propose a copying rule, in addition to the transportation rule. There would then be the task of explaining why the negative was transported in, say, (11a), but copied in (63b), and how these separate rules could form parts of an integrated system. Until such an explanation is forthcoming, however, it would seem that the negative transportation theory fails to account for sentences like (63b).

I do not claim to have anything like a perfect solution, either, but I suggest the following as a viable possibility. The negative of (64a) is (64b).

(64) a. I suppose Harry can drive.

b. I don't suppose Harry can drive.

It seems that the scope of such a negative is the whole of the sentence, not just one clause, for the negative element commands both clauses. And with performatives, this seems to have semantic implications for the subordinate clause. The second clause is still in itself positive for tag-forming purposes, but is within the scope of the negative on the first clause. Now, let us suppose that (64a) can undergo a postposing transformation, so as to produce (65).

(65) Harry can drive, I suppose.

In the event of (64a) being negated, this postposting operation would be carried out before the placement of the negative. When the second clause was subordinate to the first, it was only necessary to have a negative in the first clause to ensure that it commanded both clauses. But in (65), the postposing operation has changed the relationship of the clauses: neither is now subordinate to the other. So, if each clause is to be commanded by the negative, it will have to appear separately in each one. And it does, as (66) shows.

(66) Harry can't drive, I don't suppose.

An appropriate tag-question can then be added, as in (63b).

There are some other related phenomena that seem to throw some light on what is happening here. Questions involving performative verbs, for instance, have a rather similar paradigm to the negatives that have just been described. Consider (67a) to (67d).

(67) a. Do you think the Yankees will win?

b. * Do you think will the Yankees win?

c. Will the Yankees win, do you think?

d. * The Yankees will win, do you think?

If the question in the <u>think</u> clause comes first, as in (67a), then there is no question in the second clause. If the other clause comes

first, however, as in (67c), both clauses can be questions. This is exactly parallel to what we have just seen for negatives. When a clause containing one of a special set of verbs occurs first, with the other clause subordinated to it, affective properties like negation and questions seem to extend over the two clauses, and need to be expressed only once; but when such a clause occurs second, and the other clause is not subordinated to it, the affective properties seem to need to be expressed separately in each clause.

Actually, if we were to accept Lakoff's argument in favour of a rule of Negative Transportation, a somewhat parallel argument could be advanced in favour of a rule of Question Transportation. It is possible to make two kinds of reply to (68), as set out in (69).

(68) Do you think John quarrelled with Mary?

(69) a. Yes, I do.

b. Yes, he did.

The first of these (69a), seems to be a response that is appropriate if the first clause is regarded as being questioned; but (69b) seems appropriate if it is considered that the second clause is being questioned.

In the latter case the whole sentence is regarded as raising a question about the second clause, though the questionning device occurs in the first. Hence, a rule of Question Transportation seems as feasible as one of Negative Transportation. But surely a more likely explanation is that affectives such as negatives and questions, when they occur in the first clause, can be interpreted, under appropriate conditions, as having a scope which includes the second clause.

And now, one last problem. It was shown earlier that performative verbs are not the only buck-passing ones. It is not even certain that all the verbs Lakoff says are performatives really are. It is by no means obvious that the two verbs in (70) are of the same kind.

(70) a. I name this ship the S.S. Pericles.

b. I suppose this ship is the S.S. Pericles.

In (70a), it is clear that my words coincide with my act of naming; in (70b) it is not nearly so clear that in saying the word suppose I am performing the act of supposing. There is at least the suspicion that (70b) could be a report of a mental event that has already quietly occurred. Notice that (71a) is possible, but not (71b).

(71) a. I hereby name this ship the S.S. Pericles.

b. * I hereby suppose this ship is the S.S. Pericles.

Furthermore, there are mysteries about buck-passing verbs that are not at all solved by saying that they are performatives. There are, for instance, sentences like (72a), where the subject of the buck-passing verb is not even "I".

(72) a. You must admit (that) the book is obscene, isn't it?

b. * You must admit (that) the book is obscene, mustn't you?

This use of admit occurs only with first and second person, not with third, as (73) shows.

(73) a. I must admit (that) the book is obscene, isn't it?

b. * Tom must admit (that) the book is obscene, isn't it?

It is true that admit is a performative verb by almost anybody's definition when it is used in first person, but it is clear that it is not only in its performative use that it is a buck-passing verb. Some deictic quality allows it to operate in this capacity in either first or second person, but not third. Other verbs which are similar in this regard are agree, confess, allow, acknowledge and concede. If you agree, you have to agree WITH someone; if you confess, allow, acknowledge or concede something, you have to do it to someone, even if it is only to yourself. The notion of at least two personae being involved with these verbs may be the reason why second person, as well as the more normal first, allows buckpassing.

There is an even odder fact about admit, though: namely, that if we change the auxiliary, it ceases to be a buck-passing verb. For instance, if we substitute will for must, the pattern is the one shown in (74).

(74) a. * You will admit (that) the book is obscene, isn't it?

b. You will admit (that) the book is obscene, won't you?

Likewise, if there is no auxiliary at all, admit is not a buck-passing verb.

(75) a. * You admit (that) the book is obscene, isn't it?

b. You admit (that) the book is obscene, don't you?

It is only when must is used, in fact, that admit is a buck-passing verb. Those who consider that auxiliaries are main verbs anyway may wish to claim that the buck-passing verb here is must, rather than admit; but if so, they will face two difficulties. One is that of explaining how this verb passes the buck two clauses down, instead of the usual one. The other is that of explaining why must passes the buck only when there are certain verbs like admit in the next clause down, and not when there are others like feel, hope and want.

In this paper, I have taken just one of the main arguments that have been advanced in favour of the rule of Negative Transportation, and tried to show that the facts on which it rests require no such rule for their explanation. If we regard contrasting tag-questions as indicating that the host-clause is to be taken to be the point of view of the speaker, and matching tag-questions as indicating that it is not, then no change in the placement of the negative is necessary to yield consistent and principled semantic interpretations. Although I have expressed myself in that way, my arguments are not, in themselves meant to distinguish between interpretive and generative semantic systems, for it seems possible to construct similar arguments in either system.

NOTES

[1] "The Position of Embedding Transformations in a Grammar", Word, 19, pp. 208-231.

[2] In Papers from the Fifth Regional Meeting. Chicago Linguistic Society (1969) University of Chicago.

[3] How to do Things with Words, O.U.P., (1962), pp. 6-7.

[4] "On Some Questionable Arguments About Quantifiers and Negation", Language, 47, pp. 282-97.

[5] Personal communication.